

FOREWORD

This bulletin is the forty-second annual compilation of stream discharges and other hydrographic data relating to international aspects of the Colorado River below Imperial Dam, the Tijuana River, and other streams crossing the western land boundary of the United States and Mexico. The compilation was prepared jointly by the United States and Mexican Sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission, solely for the purpose of presenting statistical data relating to stream flow and kindred subjects for the Colorado River from Imperial Dam to the Gulf of California, the Tijuana River and its important tributaries in the United States and Mexico, and other streams, including the Alamo and New Rivers which cross the California-Baja California boundary, and the Santa Cruz River and Whitewater Draw which cross the Arizona-Sonora boundary. This bulletin contains information for the year 2001.

Stream gaging on the Colorado River below Imperial Dam began in 1902 when the station at Yuma, Arizona was established. Stage records were obtained at this station from January 1878 until December 1973, when it was discontinued. Continuous stream gaging on the Tijuana River and its important tributaries in the United States and in Mexico began in 1936. Each government operates the gaging stations located within its own country.

COLORADO RIVER BELOW IMPERIAL DAM

Below Imperial Dam, the Colorado River flows southward 16 kilometers to the mouth of the Gila River, thence westward 18 kilometers to Pilot Knob Mountain, and south 1.6 kilometers to the point where the northerly international land boundary, between California and Baja California, intersects the river. From this point the river continues to flow southward and forms the boundary between the United States and Mexico for a distance of about 35 kilometers to the point where the southerly international land boundary between Arizona and Sonora intersects the river. From this point the river continues to flow southward about 145 kilometers to discharge into the Gulf of California.

The ordinary flows of Colorado River below Imperial Dam are largely controlled by releases at Hoover Dam, completed in 1935. The releases are further regulated at Davis Dam, completed in 1950, and by Parker and Imperial Dams, completed in 1938. Small amounts of runoff may occasionally be contributed to the flow in the lower river from the usually dry arroyos draining the 28,200 square kilometers along the river from Hoover Dam to the mouth of the Gila River. In addition, flows ranging from usually minor amounts to infrequent torrential floods may enter the lower Colorado River from the Bill Williams River, draining about 1,857 square kilometers below Alamo Dam and Lake, completed in 1963; and from the Gila River, draining about 18,900 square kilometers below Painted Rock Dam and Reservoir, completed in January 1960.

At Imperial Dam, diversions are made to Gila Gravity Main Canal and All-American Canal for irrigation projects in Arizona, including the Yuma Valley, Gila and Wellton-Mohawk projects; and in California, including the Imperial Valley, Coachella Valley and Reservation Division of Yuma Project. Also, under the provisions of the 1944 Water Treaty, there may be diverted to the All-American Canal at Imperial Dam for delivery to Mexico in the Alamo Canal, or substitute canal, at the northerly boundary, a portion of Mexico's scheduled deliveries of waters of the Colorado River, which in 2001 amounted to 1,850,234 thousand cubic meters, in accordance with Article 10 of the 1944 Water Treaty. No diversions were made to a substitute canal in 2001.

Below Laguna Dam, measured and unmeasured flows are returned to the river principally as waste and drainage water from the irrigation projects in the United States. Waste and drainage waters from irrigation projects in the United States also cross the boundary into Mexico near San Luis, Arizona without returning to the river in the United States.

In the limitrophe section of the river, 1.8 kilometers downstream from the northerly boundary, Morelos Dam, the principal diversion structure for Mexico, was completed and placed in operation on November 8, 1950. Since that date, almost all Colorado River waters diverted by Mexico (except emergency deliveries to Tijuana from August 1972 to August 1980) have been diverted to the Alamo Canal at Morelos Dam.

TIJUANA RIVER BASIN

The total drainage area of the Tijuana River basin is 4,483 square kilometers, of which 27 percent lies in the United States and 73 percent in Mexico. This river is formed by the principal tributaries, Cottonwood Creek, which rises in the United States and Rio de las Palmas, which rises in Mexico. Cottonwood Creek crosses the international land boundary 34 kilometers from the Pacific Ocean to join the Rio de las Palmas in Mexico. From the confluence of these tributaries, the Tijuana River flows northwesterly 8 kilometers to cross the land boundary into the United States near San Ysidro, California and Tijuana, Baja California, and then flows westerly 10 kilometers to discharge into the Pacific Ocean 3 kilometers north of the boundary. The flow of Cottonwood Creek is partially controlled by Barrett and Morena Reservoirs in the United States, and the flow of the Rio de las Palmas is partially controlled by Rodriguez Reservoir in Mexico.

WHITEWATER DRAW NEAR DOUGLAS, ARIZONA

Whitewater Draw rises in the United States and flows south into Mexico, crossing the international boundary near Douglas, Arizona, eventually discharging into the Gulf of California through the Yaqui River in Mexico. The total drainage area above the Douglas Gaging Station is 2,650 square kilometers. A number of mountain streams in the upper reaches of the basin are diverted for irrigation, but they would normally sink or go to ground water before reaching the main water course.